

# Preparing for Workplace Violence: What Can We Do?

According to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), workplace violence is any act or threat of physical violence, harassment, intimidation, or other threatening disruptive behavior during employment. Incidents can range from empty threats, to verbal abuse, physical assaults, and even homicide. Workplace violence can happen anywhere, at any time, and can have a permanent impact on those involved. The most effective prevention plan is one put into place before any incident happens. This one pager provides direction on evaluating workplace violence threats at your organization and preparing plans to combat these incidents.

## CONDUCT A RISK ASSESSMENT

Conduct a risk assessment to determine if your workplace is at risk for workplace violence. Form an integrated team to conduct your risk assessment. Include management, key personnel, employees from different departments (e.g., safety, human resources, security), and worker representatives. Look at the design and layout of your organization. Keep the classifications of workplace violence in mind during your assessment.

Identify jobs at a higher risk for workplace violence. Examples include jobs involving: police, security guards, public service workers, retail employees, healthcare professionals, education providers, managers of eating establishments, and those who work alone or in small groups. Evaluate work activities at your organization, both on-site and off-site, and determine if any are at a higher risk for violent acts. Examples include: exchange of money, working alone or in isolated areas, providing services and care, and working the third shift.

Review the psychological health and safety of your workforce. Consider administering surveys or holding informal discussions with employees to determine their well-being. Review any past incidents of violence at your organization to find out what happened and the root causes and contributing factors of each incident. Consider reaching out to law enforcement officials to discuss the likelihood of a violent act occurring at your organization.

Review the information collected and identify the occupations and locations most at risk in your organization. Document the results of your risk assessment and take action.

## Classifications of Workplace Violence

### **Type 1: Criminal Intent**

Violent acts committed by a person who has no legitimate business at the worksite, usually accompanied with committing a crime (e.g., robbery)

### **Type 2: Customer/Client**

Violence against a worker, committed by a former or current customer or client (including patients, students, inmates) to which you have provided a service

### **Type 3: Worker-on-Worker**

Violence against a worker by a current or former worker, supervisor, or manager

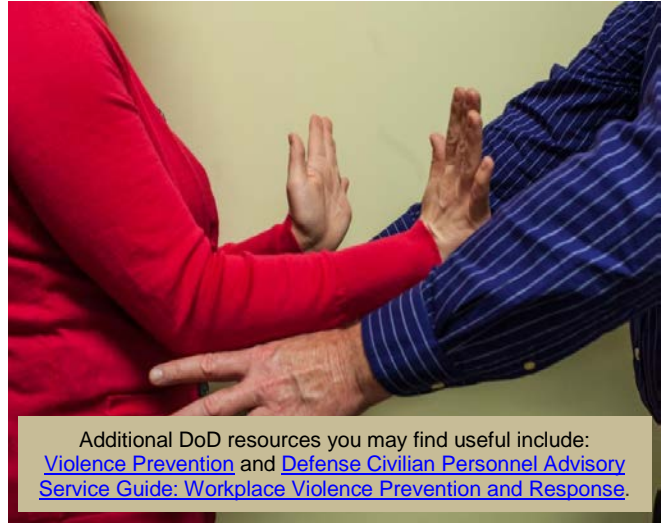
### **Type 4: Personal Relationship**

Violence committed by someone outside of the work environment, who has, or has been known to have had, a personal relationship with a worker

For additional information, review these classifications at the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health ([NIOSH](https://www.niosh.gov)).

## PREVENT RISKS

Choose methods to eliminate or minimize identified risks related to workplace violence. Follow the hierarchy of controls when possible. Think about changes to workplace design (e.g., office layouts, furniture placement, signs, lighting, surveillance, physical barriers) or administrative practices you can employ to reduce risks (e.g., electronic payment systems instead of cash, changing work shifts or work alone policies, buddy systems, checking contractor credentials).



Additional DoD resources you may find useful include: [Violence Prevention](#) and [Defense Civilian Personnel Advisory Service Guide: Workplace Violence Prevention and Response](#).

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## ESTABLISH A PROGRAM

Develop a written workplace violence program and procedures. Your program should mention violent behaviors to watch for, unacceptable behaviors and acts, what to do when an incident occurs, and incident reporting procedures. Your program should also include emergency response procedures and steps to obtain assistance from local security and law enforcement agencies if needed.

Be sure to incorporate information from your risk assessment, the Department of Defense Instruction (DoDI) 1438.06, [DoD Workplace Violence Prevention and Response Policy](#) (Reference (c) and Enclosure 3), and any applicable Service or Agency regulations and guidance.

## DEVELOP POST-INCIDENT RESPONSE

Be prepared to deal with the aftermath of an incident by incorporating post-incident response procedures into your program. Include steps to assess the causes of the incident, make workplace changes, and provide support needed for victims of violence.

## TRAINING AND EDUCATION

Train and educate your workforce on the programs, procedures, and other control methods in place to prevent workplace violence. Communicate how to identify, respond to, and report violent acts and behaviors, as well as the motto *"If you see something, say something."*

## REVIEW AND UPDATE WORKPLACE VIOLENCE INFORMATION

Periodically review and update your hazard assessment, program, and procedures. Reevaluating your organization and determining risks is an ongoing process since risks can change over time. It is important to revise and update any training you provide to your workforce too. Document any reviews and updates you make to your workplace violence information.

For additional information on the SMCX's services, please visit the SMCX-hosted website at: <https://www.smcx.org/>.